

1436

A  
L E T T E R  
\* TO THE  
OFFICERS OF THE ARMY  
IN  
I R E L A N D,  
ON THE SUBJECT OF  
AN INVASION FROM FRANCE.

INTENDED PRINCIPALLY FOR THE

M I L I T I A.

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BY AN OFFICER.  
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A

L E T T E R

TO THE

OFFICERS OF THE ARMY,

&c. &c.

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GENTLEMEN,

**I**NFLUENCED by the voice of the public in general, but chiefly by that of some men of sense and understanding, I have at length given credit to a report of an intended invasion from France; and thought it my duty, both as an Irishman and an officer, to offer to your consideration some sentiments of mine upon that most important event, I must, at the same time, lament, that many men of deep military knowledge among yourselves, whom I well know, either from incredulity, or an ill-founded modesty, have not already favoured the public with their sentiments upon a subject so interesting to it. Their doing so, while it would confer a signal favor upon all good citizens in general, and upon you in particular, would spare the public and yourselves the trouble of perusing the following pages.

I address myself to the army of Ireland, unaided, unsolicited, and uninfluenced. I humbly intreat all those who shall have the patience to peruse the following letter, not to attribute my intruding on the public time to any other motive, but that of zeal for my country; to attend more to the importance of the subject, than to the ability of its execution; and not to confound the simple, unpremeditated language of a soldier, with the more polished strains of a studied rhetorician.

But, whatever may be the success of this feeble attempt, its motives can be liable to no objection, while its author shall for ever be concealed from the public view. I claim no praise—I fear no censure; happy, if I should more effectually serve my country with my pen, than I possibly can with my sword; I address to you the following pages, influenced neither by the hope of reward, nor the fear of punishment.

Whatever vulgar prejudice may assert to the contrary, the military profession in Ireland was never upon such a respectable footing as it now is. Shall we be necessitated to turn our arms against the common enemy upon our own territory, (a misfortune which may God avert) I shall feel a signal satisfaction in bearing arms with men who have so much at stake as you have. You, gentlemen of the Militia, have ample reason to congratulate yourselves, that your situation does not admit either of the indifference of soldiers of fortune, nor the corruptness of mercenaries; but,  
that



that you are embarked in the same cause with those heroes of old, who bled at Salamis, Plataea, and Leuctra. Remember, if you are to fight, it is for your lives and properties,—for your religion, king, and country ;—for those possessions, without the least of which the virtuous men in every age and country in the world, would have rejected life as an insupportable grievance.

Situated as you are, one would, at first view, be led to imagine that a foreign invasion was a mere bubble, and that the attack of an enemy upon a country so well prepared for resistance as Ireland, was only folly and presumption ; but, unhappily, upon a nearer view of circumstances, they become less flattering. It is a folly to deny that we have many discontented people among us ; and that the internal foe is rather a dangerous one.

My object is to point out in general terms the measures which, in my opinion, would be best to take, in order to repel a foreign invasion. These I shall preface with some preliminary observations upon the discontents of some of the lower classes of people in Ireland, and upon the French revolution. In the course of these observations, I shall establish some political axioms and endeavour to deduce from them some important inferences.

This is not the proper place to introduce religious or political disquisitions ; yet such is the importance

importance of the present conjuncture, that I cannot resist the temptation of submitting to public view my creed in these matters.

The present war is a wonderful one. It bears but a very slight resemblance to other wars : It is a war of sentiments, passions, jealousy, revenge, calculated to extinguish every sentiment of humanity and honor, and uniting all the miseries of *foreign*, with all the more poignant ones of *civil* war.

Did the lower classes of people in Ireland but for a moment behold with their own eyes the miseries which the French revolution have brought on France, they would look upon their own situation as one of perfect felicity when compared to that of Frenchmen.

In lightly touching upon religious matters, I shall ever hold it as an established maxim, *that any religion, however absurd, is better than none at all*. Who can, without indignation, listen to a parcel of French *robbers* and *murderers*, composing a legislative assembly, rant about a philosophy which they do not understand, and preach that the day is come, when superstition and its adherents shall be for ever abolished among mankind ; as if man, with all the imperfections and passions which nature has implanted in him, can behold the vicissitudes of human affairs, without ascribing them to some invisible being.

I hold

I hold the abolition of the religion of its ancestors to be one of the most destructive revolutions which any country can experience; not only, because such a revolution cannot be effected without the ruin of an important order of the community, but also, that by dissolving the mutual relation which subsists between the different orders of the state, it naturally causes the dissolution of the whole. It was thus that many philosophers have ascribed the downfall of the Roman empire to the abolition of paganism, even though that tous apparently nonsensical system of faith, was succeeded by Christianity.

But who is it that we are to be indebted to for enlightening our minds on the subject of religion, and encreasing the power and opulence of the state, by relieving us from ecclesiastical oppression? Is it the Irish catholics? I know not. If from an attentive view of the progress of the French revolution, and the new metaphysics of that people, the catholics of Ireland have been induced to exchange superstition for atheism, I wish them much benefit of their philosophical bargain. If they have relieved their minds from the dread of hell-fire, and the burning sulphur of purgatory, so as no longer to scruple robbing and murdering the protestants whenever opportunity presents itself, it is not much to the credit of their *defenders*, that they ascend the scaffold with such pusillanimous terrors of futurity.

Of

Of all the religions recorded in history, the Roman catholic is that which, while it is one of the most absurd, is absolutely the *most friendly to despotism*. Arguments to support this observation, are, to an unbiassed mind, wholly superfluous, while it is notorious that this religion, ever since its establishment, has had for its fixed object, the inculcating a *slavish obedience*, and the establishment of a *despotic hierarchy*.

Should an Irish catholic say to me, "the intention of the French, by invading us, is to re-establish our holy religion, and reinstate us in our antient rights and privileges;" I would immediately conclude the man was foolishly credulous, and believed the professions which the French might make to establish a religion they so mortally hated. But, if the body of the Irish catholics were to hold out the same language, I would conclude that the greater number of them were artful hypocrites, who affected to believe so gross an imposture, in order to make it a pretext to rouse the poor and ignorant against the Protestants, and join the French; for it is wholly impossible that *many* could be dupes to so foolish an artifice.—How far their projects would succeed by their joining the French, is what I hope to make very plain in the sequel.

Having shown how absurd it would be even in the French themselves, to make use of religion as an engine in an invasion of Ireland, I shall next proceed to unfold my sentiments with respect to  
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the more formidable political one of an Agrarian law, or equality of property.

My observation upon this head is, that *liberty and equality never did, nor never can exist in any age or country in the world*; and the belief of it appears to me the most *glaring paradox* in history.

Nature itself has manifestly established inequality among men, by giving them such a multitude of different appetites and passions. Let us look to every community, from the most refined to the most savage, we shall behold it yield obedience to chieftains, kings, or magistrates.

Is Pichegru at the head of an army of eighty thousand men, upon a footing of *liberty and equality*, with a drummer of one of his battalions? Do Tallien and his lady, who go to the opera with the train of an eastern queen, associate and familiarly converse with the fish women and scavengers of the gay metropolis of France? It is absolute folly to waste words upon this subject.

I ask every gentleman of landed property in Ireland, if he is not firmly persuaded, that were his estate equally divided among his tenantry, and they, of course, as happy as they could wish, the nine-tenths of these new proprietors would, in order to gratify their attachment to spirituous liquors, sell, in the space of a few months, their freeholds to the highest purchaser, and, consequently,

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quently, re-establish the very inequality which is now the subject of complaint to them. What anarchy, what confusion, rapine, and violence would it moreover occasion in this kingdom!

With regard to my opinion upon the existing government of Ireland, though it may be deemed by many of no importance, I am firmly of opinion, *that we have the best constitution in the world*; and that our king, and his ministers, though they may have failed in the main object of this war, have perfectly merited the esteem and confidence of every lover of his country.

To convince the reader of this, I will employ no arguments, leaving those who differ with me to their sentiments; and I am so far of this opinion, that, did I even complain of tyranny, I would hold it highly injudicious, and highly unlawful, at this period, to resist government, and this; because *kingly oppression* is infinitely more tolerable than that of the multitude.

I ask any sensible dispassionate man in this country, let him lay his hand on his heart, and solemnly declare, if a revolution took place in Ireland, similar to that of France, he believes an Irish rabble would be in the smallest degree more merciful than a French one? And that it is more than probable, a fair comparison between the massacres of Dublin, Cork, and Belfast, and those of Paris, Marseilles, and Lyons, would yield to the former the atrocious pre-eminence.

The

The names of Nero, Caligula, and Domitian, will ever be detested so long as they are remembered. The names of those people who in popular tumults have committed ten thousand times more pillage, rapine, and massacre, than those tyrants, are wholly forgotten. Robespierre put many more to death than Nero.

In fact, what is in all countries called the PEOPLE, is nothing more than a ferocious untameable Tyger, which may sometimes be indulged by lengthening his chain, but never with perfect liberty.

The British constitution, which has drawn a laboured panegyric from the greatest legislator\* in the world, must be strangely altered within fifty years, if it requires alteration and improvement from the ignoble hands of united Irishmen, supported by an army of whiteboys and defenders. Is it a parcel of *united traitors*, composed of baseborn mechanics, we are to hear preach a reform in our constitution? If it is true that our constitution wants reform, are not the gentlemen of landed property in Ireland interested in preventing its becoming a despotic government, rather than a parcel of vile plebeians, who have nothing to lose, but every thing to gain in the CHAOS of a revolution? Have we no other patriots among us, but bankrupt shopkeepers, shoemakers, and weavers?

That

\* *Montesquieu.*

That ministers should be unpopular to a faction, and be reviled and calumniated by some, while they are held in the esteem they merit by the majority of the people, is a circumstance I am not surpris'd at. Did a saint in heaven take pity on this kingdom, and descend to take upon him the office of prime minister, I am very sure that he would in ten days find among the nation so much envy, malice and ingratitude, that he would take his flight back to the regions on high, and leave us once more to our own guidance.

So long as the world exists there will be envy, calumny, jealousy, and hatred among mankind, so which, by a strange and unaccountable fatality in human nature, the most sanctified morals and unblemished integrity, have not saved some of the greatest men in the universe from falling the deplorable victims. That the ministers who now direct our affairs should be attacked by censure, is a circumstance which will cause very little amazement to those who have read that Socrates, two thousand years ago, was tried, condemned, and executed for blasphemy by the Athenians.

For my own part, I am not at all surpris'd at this; but, there is another circumstance which wholly exceeds my conception, and which, were I not an eye-witness to, I could not believe. This is, that men of rank, who derive all their respectability from their high birth and large fortune, and from *these alone* should, both publicly and *privately*, encourage the dissensions of the country.



Did a third Anacharsis, equal in wisdom with the two other sages of that name, who are said to have rambled over Greece, now travel into these countries, and be told, that some of the richest men of the nation wanted to bring themselves on a level with the meanest mechanic, by an equal division of property among them, he would naturally enough conclude, that the rich, who were for this levelling scheme, were men of profound wisdom, divine morality, and perfect virtue. But how much amazed would he be to hear that they were men who never troubled their heads about moral philosophy, but were deeply versed in horse-jockeying, gambling, and fox-hunting; and, I believe, he would think it the strangest affair in all his travels, that they were not sent to Bedlam as madmen:

You will perceive, gentlemen, I do not *wholly* allude to the sister kingdom, where some unfortunate noblemen of rank, with wickedness equal to their folly, have proclaimed themselves champions of democracy. An illustrious ornament of Ireland, has already employed his eloquent pen in exposing their madness to the world; but I sincerely hope it may not rest there, that their chastisement may be of a more serious and exemplary nature; and that the theatre on which they now triumph, may, like that of Titus Manlius of old, prove that of their punishment and ignominy.

Should an Irish nobleman of fortune desire liberty and equality; should he be gratified in his wish,

wish, by the arrival of the French, and the destruction of this government, what would be the issue? If, as is usual, we judge of the future by the past, we must predict a very fatal issue for the noble democrat. The French massacred their own nobility; and will they be more tender of those of Ireland? They come and form a national guard here; they enroll our peer among their number, and find in him an excellent *companion in arms*, ready to fight the battles of liberty, the cause of which they zealously promote by helping themselves with unbounded liberality to his money, cattle, effects; (to ask his leave would be a great insult to him;) however, upon the slightest complaint against him, or even suspicion of *being suspected*; they would cut his throat, or let fly grape shot at him, with as much *sang froid* as at the meanest malefactor; and perhaps erect a permanent guillotine on the very spot where once stood the venerable mansion of his boasted ancestors.

I return God thanks I was not born a Frenchman at the close of the eighteenth century. As to the Creed of an Irish Defender, it troubles me not; but, if there be any man of rank in Ireland base enough to favour the designs of the enemy, I fervently pray that he may soon have a scaffold erected in the most public square in all Dublin, in order the more conspicuously to make his *amende honorable*.

Having now finished my observations relative to the discontents of the Irish, I shall make some observations

observations upon the French and their revolution.

Favorable as I am from principle to the monarchical form of government, I will freely acknowledge that France has laboured till within some years past under great despotism; that a reform in their government was an event wished by every friend to justice and humanity, and that if they had persevered in the moderate principles they professed in the commencement of their revolution, all Europe would have admired, and proposed as a model, their wisdom and good fortune; but, unfortunately, Europe has been an eye-witness to the miseries which the *rights of the people* have brought on the French. Guillotine, massacres, and proscriptions have, under the pretext of liberty, brought such calamities upon that unhappy country, that there is scarce a people in the world who would purchase the liberty of a thousand years at the expence of the short period of Robespierre's administration.

It is true that every revolution is attended with violences; but those which have accompanied the revolution of France have been of a nature so abominable and enormous, as to render the name of liberty insupportable to many people.

I have often heard the French extolled for their humanity; and yet have they perpetrated, within a *few years*, more barbarities than all Europe besides in *ten centuries*.

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In vain may the French democrats, that abominable herd of monsters, cite the tumults which religious zeal have caused, to prove the rage arising from liberty less cruel than that which proceeds from religion. Have not the French champions of *philosophic liberty* been seen to massacre the child before the parent, the mother before the son, and exult over the innocent victims, whom they had sacrificed to their unrelenting ferocity? This is the enemy we have to contend with.

The French nation has long since shewn us, that its faith is never to be relied on. The perfidity of the French, even under *regal* government, has been much more hurtful to us than their open hostility; but if, while guided by the much boasted laws of monarchical honor, they have been so formidable to us in that particular, how much more terrible must they now be, when they have shaken off the influence of every law divine and human!

Is there any man so deluded, so mad as to expect relief of his necessities from a Frenchman? Can we expect benevolence from a people who have converted the altars of the Supreme Being into a heap of ruins; have laid waste the most beautiful countries in Europe; and who may well, like the Satrap of Persia, shew a pyramid of human skulls as the trophy of their victories?

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An esteemed Writer \*, who has lately published his sentiments upon the rise and progress of the French revolution, appears to take it for granted the French esteem it their interest, that no other nation should render itself free, because it would then encrease in power and happiness in the same proportion as France. Surely this gentleman must jest as he frequently does. A man of his sense could not seriously entertain so foolish an idea. I maintain *that it is the interest of the French to spread their principles every where*; and that nothing can so effectually serve their project of acquiring universal dominion, as the discontents of their neighbours, and the dissolution of that mutual dependence which exists between the higher and lower orders of people in every country.

The project of every invader is to assist the people whom he invades in the recovery of rights and privileges they sometimes *have*, and more often *imagine* they have lost. The Romans of old made use of the very same artifice to enslave the world. So did the very stupid barbarians who contended with Rome. Tacitus tells you in the plainest language, that Cerealis, the Roman General, in his speech to the people of Treves, told them, that their enemies wanted to enslave them under the specious pretext of re-establishing their liberties.\*

C

After

\* Dr. Moore.

\* *The circumstances are now reversed from what they were in the time of Tacitus, but the remarks bold good*

After the French have succeeded in exciting tumult and rebellion among the lower Orders of every people, they will seize upon their properties and incorporate them with France, as the Romans did formerly; and did they succeed in that particular in Ireland, we should in some years see the French laws, language, and manners, become prevalent in this kingdom.

Let us now for a moment suppose that there is a number of the lower classes of people in Ireland such traitors, so blind to their own interests, as to wish for the arrival of a French army; yet, would an invasion of only *forty-eight hours* be the most destructive event that the very *lowest peasants* in Ireland ever experienced. The French, upon their arrival here, would put under requisition the horses, the cow, the few sheep, and the potatoes (if no better food were convenient) of a defender or a whiteboy, just as soon as they would those of the Lord Lieutenant: they would force the peasants into their army, make them oppose the brave Militia of Ireland, and stand to be fired at for half a farthing an hour. Then too late would the

good: "*Eadem semper causa Germanis transcenden-*  
*di in Gallias; libido atque avaritia, et mutanda*  
*se dis amor; ut relietis paludibus et solitudinibus*  
*suis, fecundissimum hoc solum, vosque ipsos posside-*  
*rent. Ceterum Libertas et speciosa nomina prae-*  
*texuntur: nec quisquam alienum servitium et*  
*dominationem sibi concupivit, ut non eadem ista*  
*vocabula usurparet."* Tacit. Hist. Lib. IV. 73.

traitors of Ireland repent of their treason, fast bound by the fetters of slavery, when it was no longer in their power to chuse an alternative.

I shall now endeavour to divest the French of the marvellous idea which superficial thinkers, and the vulgar, commonly attach to their victories and successes, and by showing that there is nothing whatever *supernatural* in them, point out the measures, by the adoption of which we may be prepared to meet the enemy in open field.

It is very natural to suppose that the French, having once shaken off the yoke of despotism, would combat with despair, rather than again submit to it. Their efforts these four years past have amazed all Europe; but these are no wise *wonderful*. A people irritated by opposition, and roused by a sense of impending danger, may always make great efforts. A temporary enthusiasm may inflame them with a contempt of every peril, and an insensibility to every interest but that of their country. The French fought *at home* against people who came from *afar*; they were *treble* the number of their foes; they had a guillotine *behind*, and only an enemy *before* them; no alternative left between the *certainly* of a scaffold, and the *chance* of a victory. By these *wonderful* means they have succeeded, and with them it would be very surprizing indeed, had they suffered themselves to be conquered.

An enthusiastic patriotism, a contempt of death, and a readiness to sacrifice one's life for his country, is by no means peculiar to a *republican* army. France, they say, has twenty-four millions of inhabitants ; Prussia, in 1756, had only five. France has above a hundred of the strongest fortresses in the world to defend it on the land side, and the sea upon the other ; Prussia, scarce half a dozen, and these not equal to the *weakest* on the French frontier ; yet, with all these slender means, without money, without strong places, with scattered and divided territories, without any free constitution to defend with an army at most only 150,000 men, Prussia maintained a war of *seven* entire years against the united powers of Austria, Russia, France, the Empire, and Sweden. This resistance was, I insist, *much more* wonderful than the progress of the French during the present war, and was nevertheless not half the subject of exultation to the Prussians, that their present successes inflame the French with. The Prussian generals never talked of being *tired of victories*, nor never used the savage and unmanly language of making their enemies *bite the dust*. There were no taunts, no vain boastings in the official relation of the action at Rosbach, where *no more* than *sixty thousand* Frenchmen ignominiously fled before a few battalions of Prussian infantry.

May God grant, that Ireland shall never have the necessity that Prussia had to repel a foreign invasion ; but, I hope, very clearly to shew the gentlemen of Ireland, that should necessity require it,  
we



we shall be able to repulse a foreign enemy as effectually as ever France or Prussia did.

Young soldiers of modest diffidence, who are far from being disposed to over-rate their own abilities, may entertain a terrible opinion of the French, because they have succeeded in repulsing the best disciplined troops in the world, with a mass of noisy, undisciplined, national guards. But this terrible opinion will soon cease when circumstances are duly weighed, when it is considered how enormously the French exceeded in numbers; how they poured reinforcement upon reinforcement, and supply on supply while the armies of their adversaries mouldered gradually away for want of assistance, which was often precarious, and always tardy, as it came from a great distance.

The advantages which a well disciplined army possesses over an undisciplined one, are, without doubt, very great; but they are principally felt in the commencement of a war, and afterwards become gradually less perceptible. In actual service the *minutiae* of garrison discipline must be dispensed with, and the *young* soldier, if properly commanded, in *a few days* learns to keep in rank, and draw a trigger, as well as the *old* one. It is true, that the expences attending a *new* raised army are much greater than those of an army which is under a regular system of discipline. There is a greater waste of necessaries, more sickness, more desertion, than among veterans; but  
expences,

expences, for instance with us, will be no object in case of an invasion.

We must by no means however fall into the fatal delusion of *too great a reliance* upon the British fleet, nor of entertaining *too great a contempt* of our enemy. The French have already shewn us what they are capable of effecting. They have employed treason, as well as the sword, with success. No despot ever kept his designs enveloped in a more profound secrecy than their directory; and let us take care least they should throw an army upon our coasts like lightning, before we were even apprized of their assembling an armament in their sea-ports, destined, as they may say, for the West Indies.

A French army is now a formidable one. It is no longer attended by the multitude of chariots, cooks, mistresses, lacquays, and hair-dressers, which formerly clogged its operations, and rendered a French army a subject of ridicule to any who had ever beheld a German one. It is no longer encumbered with superfluous baggage. The very officers carry their knapsacks on their backs. The only heavy train which attends the march is the artillery, which the French, conscious of their great superiority in that department, spare no expence in transporting, and there is no army more prepared for action.

Since 1770, when America commenced her commotions for independence, Europe has not been

been perfectly free from troubles, arising from liberty; and the success which attended the American struggle, afforded ambitious, troublesome men, in various parts of Europe, an opportunity to spread sedition among the people. It has, however, been the fate of every European nation which has attempted a reform of its government, to live to repent its own folly. Some, after having sacrificed thousands of their best lives, and a fruitless waste of treasure, have been reduced to slavery, and their very names abolished for ever.

What can be a more pathetic warning to the Irish nation? What more terrible calamity than the annihilation of our religion, laws, customs, and independence as a kingdom?

Such, however, appears to be the supine indolence of people in general, that this matter, which so seriously concerns them, appears to cause but very little anxiety; and, at the very period when the trumpet of alarm should sound throughout every province in Ireland, people of all ranks seem as much occupied by their amusements, as in the profound calm of a peace.

Let Irishmen talk of grievances,—let them complain of their condition,—and then look to the rest of Europe: They will see Poland, which existed for ages as an independent kingdom, endeavouring, by various struggles, to new model her constitution; they will have heard the Poles

in their assemblies, begin to use the same ferocious language with the republicans of France; and finally, after a contest, of which they promised themselves the favourable issue, reduced within the space of a *few weeks*, for ever *enslaved*, the name of Poland *abolished*, and the country incorporated with one of the most *despotic* empires in the universe.

Let us turn our eyes towards Holland. The Dutch were free in 1787. They would be freer; and what was the issue? An army of 30,000 Prussians reduced them almost without a struggle, and deprived them of a considerable share of that liberty, of which they had before been in the quiet possession. To gratify their love of freedom, in 1795 they basely betrayed us, their allies, and pusillanimously suffered their country to be over-run by the enemy. Their dykes, their morasses, which once secured them so effectually against the Spaniards, were now no longer of service to them; their noble fortresses were infamously surrendered without firing a shot, by rascally governors, worthy of that nation, who, whatever might have been their political principles, should, at least, have some consideration for the point of honor attached to the military profession; and the whole country reduced, perhaps for ever, from independence and importance, to an humble province of France.

What is the condition of the Netherlands, one of the most beautiful and fertile countries in Europe?



Europe? At length the treacherous Flemings have reaped the fruits of their ingratitude to the house of Austria. What was the tyranny they had to complain of? In 1789, their sovereign, Joseph II. seeing the greatest part of the country swarm with convents of lazy vagabond priests and friars, attempted to suppress some of them, and allowed the ecclesiastics, who inhabited them, pensions during their lives. They immediately set up the uproar of rebellion, began a civil war, which ended in their subjection; and, though they recovered all the privileges they ever possessed, they took the earliest opportunity of throwing themselves into the arms of France, and betrayed the brave Austrian army upon every occasion. They are now reduced to a province, their very name swallowed up in the hideous vortex of the French revolution.

Under the mild administration of the house of Austria, the Flemings, in every sense of the word, were a free people: they were taxed by *their own representatives*. Almost every war that took place between Austria and France was begun to fight their quarrels; in return for which, they only gave revenues which, in *forty years*, would not indemnify the court of Vienna in the expence of *three campaigns* together with an army of one regiment of dragoons, and five of infantry, indispitably the worst in the Austrian army.

Such was their condition under Austria: let us now take a glance of their condition under

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France.

France. Instead of being *taxed*, they are now *plundered* by requisitions and contributions, not laid on by their own representatives but by the French Directory. Their priests, friars, and nuns, for whom alone, in 1790, they raised a civil war, are pillaged, insulted, and expelled the country. Their darling convents are now suppressed, and their inhabitants, instead of receiving pensions as they did from Joseph II. are driven to beg in other countries; and the complaints of grievances, instead of being recompensed with redress, as they formerly were, are remedied by an instantaneous and timely application of the sabre or the guillotine.

What other fate could Ireland expect in case of conquest? Our laws, our religion, our independence lost for ever! Our nation, which is rising with such rapidity into importance in every particular, where every art and science is beginning to be cultivated with such success, and where refinement and civilization promise to flourish as much as ever they did in Greece or Rome, reduced as a province under a tyrannical, ferocious democracy! What other consequence can result but a rapid relapse into barbarism and wretchedness! Our sea-ports seldom visited even by a solitary sail, our streets overgrown with grass, our fields uncultivated, our temples and our public edifices mouldering into ruin, and perhaps travellers, at no very distant period, might in vain search for the spot where once stood the

the Parliament-house of Ireland. To have our plains ravaged, and the fruits of our industry for ever destroyed, by the prosperity of those very refined Vandals, who, under De Lorges, and Turenne, laid the upper Palatinate, the paradise of Europe, in a deplorable waste, interspersed only with ruins !

The history of all countries inform us, that no people can lose their liberty and independence, without relapsing into barbarism.

An enemy that uses only open hostility, is by far less dangerous than one which mingles treachery with force. We should upon that account be the more upon our guard against a people who, to the playfulness of children, add the ferocity of Tygers ; and who have already shewn us that they employ, with equal success, the sword and the dagger. Against such an enemy too much precaution cannot be taken.

While Sardinia is over-run and conquered ; Italy is trembling and yielding, not only to the most unjust and insolent demands, but made suffer the most poignant insults. What despot, since the creation of the world, insulted neutral states so much as to bully them, not only into a surrender of their money, but even of the trophies which their ancestors had transmitted to them ? This is the conduct which marks the progress of the French in every country

which has hitherto had the calamity of being visited by them. And if that calamity should ever reach Ireland, are the Irish, at the mercy of the French, to expect a more benignant treatment ?

Did Cæsar at this day return to life, how unutterable would be his astonishment ! How he would look around him for his conquering legions ; how would his bosom kindle with indignation, when he beheld the descendants of those Gauls, who trembled at his very name, imperiously dictate law to Rome, once mistress of the universe !

Having now flattered myself that I have shewn the people of Ireland their true interests, I shall proceed to examine the last and most important point ; and deliver my sentiments with respect to the measures which should be adopted by the army, to which the honor of defending Ireland shall be intrusted *in case of an invasion*.

I must premise that many readers, at first view, may be apt to esteem it presumption in me thus to deliver publicly my sentiments upon a subject which so seriously affects the government of Ireland, and for which it is already, no doubt, in a great measure fully prepared. But, I trust, that the perusal of what I have to say, relative to this circumstance, will fully shew that I have uniformly



formly maintained, in the conclusion of this letter, the principles which dictated its commencement. I should, indeed, equally accuse myself of a foolish *vanity*, did I presume to lay out a regular plan for the defence of Ireland, when so many experienced officers are already in the kingdom; and of *treachery*, did I publicly expose, in print, the vulnerable parts of Ireland to the enemy.

But, as in the art of war, an infinite deal depends upon fortune\*, the sentiments of a man ever so ignorant may be of service, and the greatest ignoramus in that art, may sometimes suggest hints which may be adopted with success by the most veteran general. In proposing any measures to government, I do not affect the malicious wisdom of displaying our weakness to every enemy that can read English, and shewing them the spot wherein they can attack Ireland to the greatest advantage. I only endeavour to point out, in general terms, to the officers of the Irish army, the means of carrying on a campaign in Ireland; and I hope that my sentiments upon this particular, far from shewing our weakness to the common enemy, will convince them of the folly of attempting to invade a country so well prepared to defend itself.

Let us now suppose that the French, who have near a million of men under arms, irritated by their

\* *Multum quum in omnibus rebus tum in re militari potest fortuna.*—CÆSAR COMMENT. Lib. 17, 28.

their old jealousy of England, as well as their animosity for the evils we have done them during the present war, are ready, and for aught we know, *resolutely determined* to sacrifice a hundred thousand men in an attack upon England or Ireland, and perhaps on both. This project is the more probable, as it is equally consistent with the motives of policy, and the desire of revenge. The *destruction* of the flower of the French army, is what the government of France sincerely wishes. To find employment for such vast bodies of men after the war is at an end, is what will be attended with great difficulty. For the French soldiers having then no battles to fight, might engage in cabals and intrigues, which might endanger the safety of government itself.

Wholly bent upon annoying us, these ferocious republicans are blind to personal safety ; and would, in order to accomplish an insurrection in either England or Ireland, sacrifice half their army.

Never were they better able to attempt putting this scheme into execution than at present. Their successes against the Emperor are such, as must inevitably compel him to make a peace in order to save his hereditary dominions. Holland is under their command. They have raised vast contributions in money in every country through which they have passed ; and we are told they are equipping fleets, the destination of which are unknown. Let us for a moment suppose that they embark forty thousand men in one of their sea-ports,

sea-ports ; the same wind which detains the British fleet in the channel, will speedily waft their's to our coasts. Let us even suppose that the British fleet were not detained in the channel, and that it met the French armament. The combined fleets of France, Holland, and perhaps also of Spain, might very well risk a battle as on June 1st, 1794 : our gaining the victory, and taking half a dozen sail of the line from them, would by no means prevent their landing in transports, and flat-bottom boats, in either England or Ireland. The treacherous calm which now prevails, may speedily terminate in a storm.

That of two evils the least is preferable, is a very common proverb ; and from it I shall deduce an important inference. First, then, I shall hold it an established maxim, *that the conquest of Ireland by France, is the greatest calamity which can possibly befall it ; and that any other is preferable.* In adopting this maxim, therefore, I propose, in case of the French landing, the adoption of measures, which tender minds may account *violent* ; but which, every lover of his country will be easily convinced, are equally consistent with the motives of sound policy and national honor.

I must first say, I am not of the same opinion altogether with those who think, that the French would be joined by a large body of the peasantry of Ireland if they landed. A few miscreants might join them ; but, I believe, I have already shewn very satisfactorily, that they would  
soon

soon have ample reason to repent of their treacherous folly.

Nature has implanted in the human heart a love mingled with veneration for its country, as well as its parents; and this love it is almost impossible to eradicate. If a son has been turned out of doors, or otherwise ill-treated by his father, and that the next day he sees his father insulted by a stranger in open street, will not every spectator expect he will fly to his assistance? All his complaints of his father's ill usage, however well founded they are, will not save him from the reproaches of cowardice and ingratitude, to which his neutrality will expose him. Since the heathens themselves, who in some cases looked upon revenge as a virtue, held it an established rule, that the ill-treatment of their country, like that of their parents, should be borne without a murmur; how much more shall we be of that opinion who profess a religion, one of whose fundamental doctrines is the forgiveness of injuries?

Was there ever a man more injured by his countrymen than Camillus the Dictator? They drove him into banishment without reason; yet, when he saw them besieged, and on the point of yielding, he raised an army, routed the enemy, and saved his country. Such a victory must have afforded him infinitely more satisfaction than the extermination of his ungrateful countrymen.

It



It was a mistake in this particular that proved so fatal to the Duke of Brunswick, and the allied army, in 1792. He entered France at the head of a 100,000 men, preceded by the most plausible manifestoes, and attended by some thousands of French gentlemen. He passed through countries whose inhabitants were as much devoted to the royal interest as to the convention, which was then grown infamous by the massacres of September; yet not a Frenchman joined him. The idea of being dragooned in a change of government by an army of Austrians and Prussians, was a morsel too hard for digestion. There are, at this moment, many men who fight desperately in Jourdan or Buonaparte's van-guard, and are as true royalists as ever existed; but they fight as *Frenchmen*, not as *Republicans*.

In order, however, to leave as little as possible to probabilities; I recommend a very effectual scheme for preventing the French from being joined or aided by any Irishman. Nothing can so effectually shew the enemy that we propose doing nothing *by halves*, that we are in *earnest*, and resolutely bent on the extermination of every invader, as our *hanging, without mercy*, in front of our army; the following description of men, if any such should exist.

I. Every native of Ireland who shall be found among the enemy, no matter whether he has a French commission or not.

E

II. Every

II. Every *Irishman*, from the peer to the beggar, who shall either join the enemy, or be convicted of having maintained any private correspondence with them.

III. Every *foreigner* who resides in Ireland, and who shall join them on their landing.

A small address from an anonymous writer, has just appeared upon the subject of an invasion. The author, who calls himself a country gentleman, appears to be a man of sense and a good citizen; but, if I mistake not his profession, does not give any room to suppose that he is very conversant in military affairs. I disapprove in particular of his scheme of embodying the yeomanry, as in England and Switzerland. An army of yeomen would be too unwieldy to oppose to one of veteran French, hardened by four years continual fighting. My plan is, that the Irish army shall compose only *one machine*, commanded by *one general*, and actuated by *one sentiment*; viz. that of the *total destruction* of every invader, or of gloriously falling in the contest. To put arms into the hands of any men, who were not *perfectly*, and absolutely under the controul of government, would be as injudicious as dangerous. There might be among them some dangerous persons, who would *talk* of privileges, when they should only *think* of fighting. Neither do I much approve of making soldiers of married men, especially those above a certain age. The father of a large family has many endearments to connect

connect him to life, that an unmarried man has not. I shall, however, afterwards devise a method by which the married citizens shall render an effectual service to their country.

I propose the conduct of the Romans against Pyrrhus, as a model for our imitation in case of an invasion, and that we shall scruple the employment of no effort which is *open*, but totally reject with disdain every thing *underhand*. This will not be the result of a vain confidence in ourselves, and a rash contempt of our enemy, but of true policy. For open force gives *confidence* to an army, while deceit, however successful, has a contrary effect.

The places most exposed to an invasion, are the southern and western coasts of this kingdom. Yet, so cunning are the French in all their operations, that it appears to me just as probable they would attempt to disembark in Dublin Bay, or Belfast, as in Cork, Kinsale, or Galway. My design, therefore, is to point some general methods by which we may not be wholly unprepared for them in *any* part of Ireland.

I propose, for the effectual defence of Ireland, an army of forty thousand regular infantry, and five thousand regular horse. The latter will give us a vast advantage; because, if the French should come, it is not probable, nor indeed very possible, that they can bring much cavalry with them.

Besides these 45,000 regular men, I propose a levy of 5000 irregulars, viz. 3000 foot and 2000 horse. These will partly compose the van-guard, and skirmish with the enemy. It will be sufficient to arm the irregular foot with carabines, such as our horse now use, because the former shall not form in the order of battle; and their horse with a sabre and pistols, in the nature of the Austrian Hulus\*. Carabines are, in my opinion, superfluous, and only an encumbrance to any cavalry whatever †.

Those light troops are so indispensibly necessary, that no army can well take the field without them. Their being lightly armed, enables them to march much more expeditiously than the regular troops; they convoy supplies, intercept those of the enemy, save the regular troops much fatigue, and render a surprize impracticable. Besides this, they may, especially the horse, form an excellent nursery for the regular cavalry.

But may not a man say to me, these are fine projects; but *where* are all those troops which you have raised so rapidly upon paper? Now, this is what I will attempt to elucidate.

Though

\* *The Austrian Hulus have pikes, but here we may dispense with them.*

† *It is amazing to me that the cavalry use carabines still. The Prussian horse, in the seven years war, never fired a single shot, and performed wonders on every occasion.*



Though I disapprove of the French systems in most particulars, I must here propose the adopting of some of them. To raise the force I propose, nothing will do so effectually as coercion. The moment a French fleet appears off our coast, with an intention of landing, let government declare the kingdom in a state of hostility; let all civil business be suspended, and every thing be ruled by the summary proceedings of a military government; and let every man capable of bearing arms, be instantly summoned to defend his country. These methods which have so successfully been practised by the French, in an *unjust* cause, may very well be used by us in a *just* one.

Let all the horses be seized on. The owners are to receive a full restitution. Let good horses and good men be selected, to augment the cavalry and infantry; and to form them into the irregular corps I mentioned. In order to accelerate the discipline of these, let their non-commissioned officers be selected from such of the militia as are zealous to distinguish themselves, and whose fidelity and zeal are known to their respective colonels.

In short, government may have recourse to what is called in France *requisition*, not attended with the robbery of that perfidious people; because a full indemnification is made for every thing taken, and, in order to prevent any clamour or remonstrance which may be raised against the *indispensibly necessary* measures which I propose,

pose, a military commission is to be appointed, in order to try all those who shall attempt, either by deeds or words, to obstruct the measures of government; and, upon due conviction of their crimes, they shall receive the *immediate punishment* which they merit.

Some may say that these measures may favour of tyranny; but, to these I answer, that they are really *humane* and just; because, as I already have said, the conquest of Ireland by the French being the *greatest possible evil* that can befall Ireland, the more effectually that evil can be prevented the better; and if government (as I doubt not will be done) in case of an invasion, *instantly* and *resolutely* puts the measures which I have proposed into execution, the Irish nation, in the short term of *a few days*, will have an army fully prepared to meet the enemy in the field of battle.

I am a declared enemy to the augmenting an army by the raising of new regiments. These new regiments are raised with difficulty, and take a long time to learn their discipline; because both the officers and non-commissioned officers themselves, are in general only recruits. Raise a hundred recruits without an old soldier, they will scarce know their evolutions in some months; but thrust ten new among fifteen old soldiers, and they will, if not uncommonly stupid, appear like soldiers in eight days.

Every

Every captain of militia is supposed to be a man of property ; he has lands, he has tenants. My project is to augment the militia *at once* to double its present number, in case of an invasion. Was there a return made of all the men capable of bearing arms in every district throughout Ireland, I would propose the following method of embodying such a number of them as was wanting. As none of the militia regiments are in their own counties, when orders arrive for their marching to the rendezvous of the army, they are immediately to detach parties to collect as hastily as possible all the men appointed in the district. These they are to march with them, and subsist as soldiers until their arrival at the rendezvous, where they will be delivered up to the regiment of their county.

A captain and two subalterns can as easily command a company of a 100 men as 50 ; and half a company formed of recruits, will much sooner learn their duty when they can be corrected by the other half, than if they formed a company alone ; besides, it will spare government the expence of officers. There are armies in Europe whose companies are above 200, and others 300, and their regiments of four thousand men, with few more officers than our regiments have.

The light corps are to be formed without much regard to size ; the officers to be composed from the subalterns, and experienced corporals and serjeants

serjeants of the militia. The infantry are to be divided into *battalions*, and the horse into *corps*; each to consist of 500 men, and to be commanded by a major, or colonel, who shall have permanent rank in the army.

You will perceive, gentlemen, I only offer hints relative to *general* measures of defence; I do not intend to enter much into *particular* ones; because a regular plan of operations may be rendered wholly abortive by the arrival of unforeseen events.\*

I shall now prepare to examine the conduct of our army in the field.

I will suppose two theatres of war in Ireland. The French will direct, I am pretty certain, their operations against one, rather than against many places; because they will then be the more formidable with their united, than with their divided

\* A pamphlet upon the Defence of Ireland has appeared some months since. Although the author does not appear to want sense, he tells us little new. The whole is a hush of old military common place, which is to be found in all tactic writers, from Vegetius down to Marshal Saxe. The operations of a general are not to be learned, by him, from books. An unforeseen and apparently trifling incident has often blasted the finest plans. In general, the threadbare calculations of this author, appear to be a malicious effort to point out Ireland's weakness, not her strength; and may, for aught I know, to be the production of some Northern Traitor.



divided forces. The theatres of war which I mean are the southern of the county of Cork, and the western in that of Galway.

Upon the first appearance or intelligence of a French fleet preparing to land, the inhabitants of the coast are to take all the effects which they can transport with them, and drive their cattle back towards the interior of Ireland. Such of their property as cannot be taken with them, either corn or potatoes, must be carefully destroyed. A circle with a radius of 30, at least 20, around the place of disembarkation, is to be converted into, if possible, a desert. This is a very effectual method to stop an enemy's progress; and has often been practised with success.

The inhabitants of the towns are, if possible, to remove in the same manner with, at least, their valuable effects. The people who shall thus emigrate, shall, at the conclusion of the war, be fully indemnified by government; and those who shall not emigrate, if they cannot give a proper cause, shall be proceeded against as traitors.

In order to take the field as quick as possible, orders are instantly to be detached to all the commanding officers of regiments in Ireland, to proceed by forced marches to the place of rendezvous, which, if the war is in the south, I propose to be Mallow, or Fermoy. To assemble an army nearer the enemy would not be prudent. Meanwhile a corps of reserve of 5000 men, chiefly  
F infantry,

infantry, is to be formed near Dublin, and the same number near Athlone. These will preserve our communication with the interior, and suppress any troubles which may arise.

The troops are to take no baggage, but what is absolutely necessary. Every man is, at least, to be furnished with 200 rounds of ammunition.

The officers are, on the march, to take the most active precautions against surprize and desertion. They are to mount strong guards, and to patrol incessantly ; and, in order to keep the more compact, they are to crowd into the most wretched cabins, both men and officers.

The troops being as little as possible encumbered with baggage, those which lie in the most distant parts of Ireland, will, by a march of eighteen or twenty miles a day, reach the place of rendezvous in a fortnight.

I suppose now assembled an army of thirty battalions, and fifty squadrons, with a hundred pieces of cannon, together with a train of heavy artillery, the whole exclusive of the 5000 irregulars. I would have the cavalry as strong as possible, for the reason before mentioned.\*

The army now assembled, is to move towards the enemy. It will be met on its march by the  
farmers

\* *The battalion I esteem 1000, and the squadron 100.*

farmers and peasants, who are retiring with their cattle and effects before the French. From these the army can supply themselves with a considerable number of recruits, horses, and heads of cattle, which can be driven along the march, as is usual, for the subsistence of the troops.

Let us suppose our vanguard advances, and skirmishes with that of the enemy ; it will save time for the reinforcement of our army, by rendering it more difficult for the enemy to advance. It will also gain another important point, by familiarizing our troops with the aspect of an enemy.

The French on landing would, I am sure, rely most upon the rapidity of their movements, and the familiarity of their troops with danger. And, I confess, that it would be an imprudent measure immediately to offer battle with troops, who have never beheld either battle or skirmish before. Prudence, however, may soon remedy this. Experience has proved that a few skirmishes, *ever so trifling*, will render an army, especially one which fights for its country, almost completely prepared for action. It is principally for this end I intend the light troops.

In order to avoid treachery, a regular police is to be established throughout Ireland. The citizens in every town in Ireland, whom, I already said, I do not approve of enrolling into regiments, I would propose forming into town guards, and

to have arms and ammunition distributed among them. In order to be assured of their fidelity, they are to be known by some respectable magistrate in the town, or district where they reside, and their officers, whatever they shall be called, shall have commissions signed by the general commanding the province.

The duty of these guards shall be, to watch the magazines formed for the army ; to assist in the levy of recruits ; to escort prisoners ; to stop vagabonds, and stop all who shall attempt to travel through the country without a passport ; and a number of other duties, which would require some thousands of the regular troops employed against the enemy to perform.

These guards are to have whatever pay government thinks proper, while they are embodied.

Proper measures being taken, all this may in three weeks be effected.

Let us suppose the French to land at Kinsale. They will take some days to land their stores, artillery, &c. and to reconnoitre the country. If meanwhile our army assembles on the Blackwater, it can advance and take a strong position upon the hills south of Cork, provided the headquarters of the French are still in Kinsale. The right of our army may lean upon the hills behind Inishannon ; and the centre and left, upon the range of heights which stretch from thence  
towards



towards Passage. Every effort is to be made that a city so important as Cork, shall not fall into their hands.

Our troops being, as I already said, accustomed to fire, and circumstances permitting, I propose a battle. We are to imitate the French method of returning to the charge as often as possible; for, however we may lose by this method, our receiving continual supplies, which the enemy from their distance from home cannot receive, will give us in a short time a decided superiority. Besides, our fighting upon our own territories, will give us two other capital advantages; 1st, our knowledge of the country, and 2d, our opportunities of receiving intelligence.

In order to bring the war to as speedy a conclusion as possible, and to convince our own troops, as well as the enemy, that we are in earnest, a few resolutions are *very*, if not *absolutely* necessary.

I. To refuse no opportunity of giving battle, whenever it offers itself in the least degree favourable.

II. Our horse, in particular, are not to announce themselves with firing, but instantly to gallop with their sabres into the enemy's ranks.

III. Our foot is to make as much use of the bayonet as possible; but, by this, I do not mean ever to propose the foolish idea of taking  
their

their ammunition from the men, or taking their flints away, which some military men of more valour than sense have proposed.

IV. To give and take as little quarter as possible.

It requires only the exhortation and example of the generals and inferior officers to put these rules into speedy practice. Nothing can so rapidly infuse into the minds of our troops, the resolution of conquering or dying.

In case our troops should gain the victory, they are to pursue the enemy day and night, until they are driven out of the kingdom.

In case, however, of a defeat, measures are more difficult to observe. The army is then to retire over Cork, and to take its position upon the heights behind the river Lee; its right extending towards Macroom, its centre leaning upon Blarney, and its left upon Glanmire.

All the bridges are to be broken down in the retreat, and the roads damaged as much as possible.

The mountains of the county of Cork, and of Munster in general, will render the progress of an enemy very difficult, if the ground be well disputed with them.

Meanwhile

Meanwhile all possible efforts are to be made for the reinforcement of our army ; some thousands of men are immediately to be levied thro' the different counties by the magistrates, and escorted from town to town by the guards I have already mentioned ; and the reserve corps are to send all the troops they can spare to the army from Dublin and Athlone.

Such are the outlines of my plan for carrying on the campaign in the South. Let us now for a moment conceive it in the West.

Should Connaught be the theatre of war, by the enemy's landing in Galway, many people who mistake their *fears*, or, perhaps, their *treachery*, for military skill, will say, we are more exposed on that side than upon any other. So far am I, however, of a contrary opinion, that I maintain we are the *strongest* in that quarter ; and I support that assertion by two powerful reasons.

I. The rendezvous of our army, I propose to be little more than a day's march west of Athlone, which stands exactly in the centre of Ireland. All the troops in Ireland can arrive there in about eight days ; and if the enemy shall not have landed in great numbers, they can be attacked with great advantage before they are prepared for resistance.

II. Connaught is less peopled, and consequently less cultivated than the other provinces of Ireland ; and the idea which I have suggested, of driving

driving away the cattle (in which the riches of that country chiefly consists) if put in execution, will render the subsistence of any large body of invaders almost impossible.

My general plan is as follows: should the enemy land a considerable force in Galway, I propose a defensive plan of operations. The cattle of the country is then to be driven, if possible, over the Shannon at Athlone and Portumna. Should the rendezvous be placed about Loughrea, the army, as I already said, may in a few days be assembled, and the generals may be able to judge from circumstances, whether an offensive or defensive plan is advisable. Should they resolve upon the latter, let the army seize upon some strong position about Athenry or Loughrea, and having intrenched it with the utmost care, await the enemy in this position; let strong parties be detached to cut off the enemy's supplies, and render their subsistence as precarious as possible. The consequence of this will be, that if the enemy do not retire soon, they must give battle with every disadvantage.

Several positions may be taken between Loughrea and Athlone, which circumstances alone, and the enemy's operations, will dictate; and the roads of Connaught, which in many places lead through bogs, may, with little trouble, be rendered unfit for transporting, at least, heavy artillery.

These



These are all the *general* ideas which I shall suggest for the defence of Ireland, in case of an invasion. I hope, and indeed I am convinced, they may be applied with success to *particular* circumstances.

And now, gentlemen of Ireland, let me conclude, with once more addressing myself to you.

When the enemy appears in view, assemble around the standard of national honor, and reject with disdain every alternative which is situated between DEATH and VICTORY. If any among you have grievances to complain of, whatever their nature may be, seek redress from yourselves, and never from Frenchmen.

I have the honor to be,  
Gentlemen,  
Your faithful,  
Humble Servant,  
AN OFFICER.

These are all the great things which I shall  
suggest for the defence of Ireland, in case of an  
invasion. I hope, and believe I am convinced  
they may be applied with success to various  
circumstances.

And now, gentlemen of Ireland, let me con-  
clude with once more addressing myself to you.

When the enemy appears in view, assemble  
around the standard of national honor, and  
reject with disdain every alternative which is  
presented between DEATH and VICTORY.  
If any among you, however, should be  
gained of whatever their name may be, look to  
themselves from yourselves, and never from French  
men.

I have the honor to be,  
Gentlemen,  
Your faithful,  
James Sturges,  
AN OFFICER.

